

REMARKS

Claims

After entry of this Amendment, Claims 1-10, 12-14, 18-22, and 24-39 are pending in the present application, with Claims 1, 18, and 27 being independent. Applicants have amended Claims 1 and 18 herein. Additionally, Applicants have canceled Claims 11 and 23 without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited therein. No new matter has been added.

Summary of the Office Action

Allowable Subject Matter

In the Office Action dated October 19, 2004, the Examiner allowed Claims 27-39. Furthermore, the Examiner objected to Claims 8-11, 13-14, 21, 23, and 26 for being dependent upon a rejected base claim and indicated that those claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As discussed in more detail below, Applicants have incorporated allowable subject matter into the independent claims.

Claim Rejections

In the office action, the Examiner issued the following rejections:

1. Claims 1, 4-7, 12, 18, and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Kluska et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,136,121
2. Claims 18 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Smith et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,696,864

3. Claims 18-20, 24, and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Tucker et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,828,807
4. Claims 2, 3, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kluska et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,136,121
5. Claim 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Tucker et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,828,807

Applicants submit that the amendments herein overcome the Examiner's rejections by incorporating allowable subject matter into independent Claims 1 and 18.

Response to the Office Action

Claims 27-39

Applicants gratefully accept the Examiner's decision to allow Claims 27-39.

Claims 1-14

In response to the Office Action, Applicants have amended independent Claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter previously recited in dependent Claim 11. Accordingly, Applicants submit that independent Claim 1 and Claims 2-10 and 12-14 depending therefrom are allowable because the base claim (independent Claim 1) is patentable over the documents cited by the Examiner. Applicants have canceled Claim 11 without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited therein.

Claims 18-26

In response to the Office Action, Applicants have amended independent Claim 18 to include the allowable subject matter previously recited in dependent Claim 23. Accordingly, Applicants submit that independent Claim 18 and Claims 19-22 and 24-26 depending therefrom are allowable because the base claim (independent Claim 18) is patentable over the documents cited by the Examiner. Applicants have canceled Claim 23 without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited therein.

Applicants are not conceding that the rejections presented in the Office Action are accurate or correct. Applicants present the claim amendments and cancellations herein to allow a patent to issue for the subject matter found allowable by the Examiner. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of the original claims in a continuation application and to submit remarks in response to the Examiner's claim rejections in such a continuation application.

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit the foregoing as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated October 19, 2004. Applicants submit that this Amendment places the application in condition for allowance and respectfully request such action. If any issues exist that can be resolved with an Examiner's Amendment or a telephone conference, please contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at 404.572.2809.

Respectfully submitted,



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